

(Respondent)
Oral interview
Project I.D. No. 6

NAME: HOMMA, YOSHIYE DATE OF BIRTH: 3/13/1895 PLACE OF BIRTH: SHIMANE-KEN
Age: 75 Sex: F Marital Status: M Education: GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1919 Age: 24 M.S. M Port of entry: SAN FRANCISCO
Occupation/s: 1. SCHOOL GIRL 2. POULTRY FARM HELP 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. SACRAMENTO 2. _____ 3. _____
Religious affiliation: CHRISTIAN - 1923
Community organizations/activities: CHURCH

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: _____
Name of relocation center: TULE LAKE
Dispensation of property: AMER FRIEND WHO SOLD IT Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. WASHROOM CLEANER
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: OCT. 1942 - SALT LAKE CITY

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: _____
Address/es: 1. SACRAMENTO 2. _____
3. _____
Religious affiliation: CHRISTIAN
Activities: 1. POULTRY FARMING 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: P. KATO Date: 1971 Place: SACTO ?
Translator: P. KATO

#6

A STUDY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF ISSEI IN THE USA

1. IN JAPAN

YOSHIYE HOMMA, 75 YEARS OLD. BORN SHIMANE KEN, NISHIGUN, HATAGUMA, ON MARCH 13, 1895.

I WAS YOUNG WHEN THESE WARS OCCURRED SO I HAVE NO RECOLLECTIONS.

HAPPY EVENT WAS THE TIME WHEN I WAS IN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL WHEN I HAD PLEASANT RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS. SUFFERINGS, IT'S TOO FAR IN THE PAST, AND I HAVE NO RECOLLECTION.

RELIGION OF FAMILY - BUDDHIST.

BEFORE I BECAME A CHRISTIAN I HEARD RUMORS ABOUT IT AND THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD RELIGION.

DEPENDING ON MY BROTHER AND MY UNCLE WHO WERE IN NEW YORK, I GOT MARRIED AND CAME TO AMERICA.

I GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL.

REASON WHY I CAME TO AMERICA IS THAT I GOT MARRIED.

II. ON THE SHIP

SAN FRANCISCO
I CAME TO AMERICA/ON MAY 5, 1919 BY WAY OF HAWAII. JAPANESE IN HAWAII AT THAT TIME DID NOT SEEM TO BE/^{WAS}AFFLUENT.SOCIETY, I THOUGHT. JUST BEING THERE ONE DAY, I CAN/^{NOT}SAY FOR SURE.

THE SHIP WAS KOREA MARU. THE PASSENGERS WERE MOSTLY PICTURE BRIDES, CHINESE AND MANY OTHER NATIONALITIES. IT WAS MY FIRST TIME ON A SHIP - IT WAS VERY ROCKY AND FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE.

AMERICA, QUITE DIFFERENT FROM JAPAN, WAS MAGNIFICENT WITH SAN FRANCISCO'S TALL BUILDINGS. I THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD COUNTRY. IN AMERICA, MY HUSBAND'S FATHER RAN A POULTRY FARM SO WE HELPED WITH THE BUSINESS.

III. FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA

MY IMPRESSION OF AMERICA WAS THAT IT IS A VERY GOOD PLACE. AMERICAN IMMIGRATION OFFICERS WERE VERY KIND AND GOOD TO US. WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN AMERICA, MY FATHER-IN-LAW'S BUSINESS WAS POULTRY FARMING, BUT I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND

ENGLISH SO IN ORDER TO LEARN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN WAYS, I WORKED FOR A VERY WEALTHY AMERICAN FAMILY.

AT THAT TIME, I WAS IN CALIFORNIA. JAPANESE THEN COULD NOT BUY LAND. MY FATHER WAS DOING GOOD BUSINESS ON POULTRY FARM SO I HELPED HIM. SAD EXPERIENCE THAT I RECALL IS THAT UP TO MY TIME OF MARRIAGE I HAD NEVER WORKED BEFORE. IT WAS A VERY TRYING TIME FOR ME TO WORK ON THE FARM. MY FAMILY LIFE WAS RATHER COMPLICATED AND I WANTED TO MAKE IT MORE HARMONIOUS AND PEACEFUL. AT THAT TIME I GOT ACQUAINTED WITH MRS MIYOSHI AND I TOOK MY CHILDREN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AND READ THE BIBLE AND HELD SERVICES. THOSE DAYS I SPENT WITH MRS MIYOSHI IN SUNDAY SCHOOL WERE THE MOST UNFORGETTABLE AND ENJOYABLE TIME OF MY LIFE.

MRS MIYOSHI WAS A VERY EARNEST PRAYER AND WHENEVER I HAD VEXING PROBLEMS I POURED OUT MY HEART AND CHAGRIN TO HER AND TOGETHER WE PRAYED SO THAT EVEN NOW MY RECOLLECTION IS VERY DIM. I HAD MORE SUFFERINGS THAN I HAD FUNNY ONES. HAVING NEVER WORKED BEFORE, I WAS SLOW, AND I WAS VERY TROUBLED, BUT MRS MIYOSHI PRAYED FOR ME AND I RECEIVED GOD'S STRENGTH.

IV. SETTLEMENT PERIOD

MY HUSBAND CAME TO MY VILLAGE TO MARRY ME. THE WEDDING CEREMONY WAS HELD AT OYASHIRO. HE CAME AFTER ME SO IT WAS NOT A PICTURE BRIDE WEDDING.

I WAS HOMESICK BEING SO FAR AWAY FROM HOME. WHEN I WENT/ALONE TO LIVE WITH AN AMERICAN FAMILY, I THOUGHT OF HOME AND GOT HOMESICK BUT AFTER I RETURNED TO THE POULTRY FARM AND WAS KEPT VERY BUSY I FORGOT ABOUT IT.

IN ORDER TO GET USED TO AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE, I WENT TO WORK FOR AN AMERICAN FAMILY TO LEARN ENGLISH. I HAD NEVER WORKED BEFORE BUT MY EMPLOYER WAS VERY KIND AND I DIDN'T HAVE TOO MUCH TROUBLE.

DURING THOSE DAYS IN CALIFORNIA, JAPANESE COULD NOT OWN LAND. SINCE MY CHILDREN WERE SMALL AND COULD NOT USE THEIR NAMES, WE BROUGHT LAND IN THE NAME OF OUR TRUSTED FRIEND'S DAUGHTER. MANY JAPANESE WERE OBJECTS OF DISCRIMINATION BUT WE WERE NOT DISCRIMINATED AS MUCH. AT FIRST I LEARNED ENGLISH BY WORKING

IN AN AMERICAN FAMILY. I WANTED TO GO TO SCHOOL TO LEARN ENGLISH BUT BECAUSE WE LIVED IN THE COUNTRY AND COULD NOT DRIVE A CAR I WAS NOT ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL.

AS IN JAPAN, THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY TOOK CARE OF ALL THE EXPENSES SO I DID NOT HAVE MY OWN INCOME TO SPEAK OF BUT I DID NOT EXPERIENCE ANY INCONVENIENCE.

OUR FIRST HOUSE WE BROUGHT IN SACRAMENTO FOR \$35,000. NO ONE HELPED US TO PURCHASE THE PROPERTY. WE PURCHASED THE ENTIRE POULTRY FARM FROM A MAN WHO OWNED A POULTRY FARM.

I TOOK CARE OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE AND WAS VERY BUSY SO I HAD NO TIME FOR HOBBY OR ENTERTAINMENT. JUST GOING TO SUNDAY SCHOOL WITH MRS MIYOSHI WAS MY ONLY PLEASURE.

AS MY CHILDREN GREW UP THEY WERE ABLE TO HELP AND ALSO THEY WERE ABLE TO DRIVE ME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL. THAT WAS MY MOST PLEASANT MEMORY. SINCE MY FAMILY LIFE WAS DIFFICULT, THERE WAS MUCH SUFFERING FOR ME, BUT THIS SUFFERING WAS ALLEVIATED BY PRAYER AND IN SUFFERING I FOUND STRENGTH.

I DID NOT SEND MY CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.

I WAS YOUNG DURING WORLD WAR I DAYS SO I HAVE NO RECOLLECTION.

IN ORDER TO APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP, I WENT TO A SEGREGATED SCHOOL BUT DUE TO BUSY LIFE AT HOME, I COULD NOT GO VERY LONG AND SINCE I DID NOT HAVE MUCH OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH, I AM NOT VERY VERSED IN ENGLISH.

I BECAME A CHRISTIAN IN 1923. MRS MIYOSHI CAME TO MY HOUSE AND ASKED ME TO SEND MY CHILDREN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL. I SENT MY CHILDREN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT. I HEARD THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT GOD AND WITH THIS I THOUGHT I COULD SAVE MY FAMILY SO I LEARNED TO DRIVE AND TOOK MY CHILDREN WITHOUT FAIL EVERY SUNDAY TO CHURCH.

DURING DEPRESSION, PRICES ALL WENT DOWN. EGGS SOLD FOR 12 CENTS A DOZEN. IT WAS VERY HARD TO MAKE A LIVING, BUT I WAS THANKFUL THAT SOMEHOW WE WERE ABLE TO KEEP GOING.

AFTER MARRIAGE, I DECIDED TO STAY PERMANENTLY IN AMERICA.

VI. THE WORLD WAR II PERIOD

OUR BUSINESS WAS POULTRY FARMING AND WE WERE NOTIFIED OF THE EVACUATION AND HAD TO DISPOSE AND SETTLE THE AFFAIRS WITHIN ONE WEEK. IT WAS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF EGG LAYING SEASON BUT WE HAD TO SELL ALL THE EGGS AT A BIG LOSS.

ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR - WE WONDERED WHAT WILL BECOME OF US AND WERE WORRIED. WHEN WE RECEIVED THE NOTICE FROM THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION TO EVACUATE WITHIN A WEEK, I FELT LIKE CRYING. IT WAS HARD JUST TO LEAVE EVERYTHING AND GO. ALTHOUGH WE FELT VERY UNEASY WE HAD TO LEAVE OUR PROPERTY AND BUSINESS IN CARE OF OUR AMERICAN FRIEND WHO LATER SOLD THE POULTRY FARM VERY CHEAPLY.

MY CHILDREN WERE AT THAT TIME - YONEO, 19; DON, 18; 2 MORE DAUGHTERS?

SINCE I DID NOT ATTEND AMERICAN CHURCH, I HAVE NO COMMENT, BUT I KNOW THAT AMERICAN CHURCHES WERE VERY KIND TO JAPANESE. IN IDAHO, MANY EVACUEES WENT TO AMERICAN CHURCHES, WERE BAPTIZED AND ENTERED THE FAITH.

VII. ASSEMBLY CENTER, RELOCATION CENTER, WAR TIME PERIOD CONDITION IN

WE WERE SENT TO TULE LAKE. THE/CAMP WAS BETTER THAN I ANTICIPATED AND THE FOOD WAS GOOD. WE RECEIVED CLOTHING AND THOSE WHO WORKED RECEIVED \$6.00 EVERY MONTH AND I THOUGHT THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TREATED US DECENTLY.

MY MOST VIVID MEMORY OF THE RELOCATION CAMP IS MY MISSION WORK AMONG THE JAPANESE IN CAMP.

SOME JAPANESE THOUGHT THAT JAPAN WON THE WAR AND THERE WERE MANY WHO OPPOSED AMERICA. CHRISTIANS TRIED TO CALM THEM BUT MANY DID NOT HEED US SO AFTER TEN MONTHS WE LEFT CAMP AND CAME TO SALT LAKE CITY TO JOIN MRS MIYOSHI WHO WAS ALREADY IN SALT LAKE CITY.

AS LONG AS WE LIVE IN AMERICA, WE SHOULD BE LOYAL TO AMERICA.

MY FEELING WHEN PUT INTO CAMP WAS THAT OF LONELINESS, BUT THE FAMILY WAS TOGETHER SO IN SPITE OF BEING LONELY, I FELT EASY IN MIND. IN THE MIDST OF GOOD TREATMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT, WE LIVED IN CAMP.

AS TO PROBLEM OF LOYALTY, I THINK NISEI, AS LONG AS THEY ARE AMERICANS, SHOULD BE LOYAL TO AMERICA.

I HAD MANY INTERESTS - I STUDIED ENGLISH, FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS AND TOOK PART IN OTHER ACTIVITIES, BUT MY MOST IMPORTANT WORK WAS MISSION WORK. REV KAWASHIMA TOLD ME THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I SET ASIDE MY PERSONAL INTERESTS AND THAT PREACHING THE GOSPEL WAS MORE IMPORTANT. SO I CARRIED HIS SACHEL, IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING, AND I VISITED THE FAMILIES WHOSE SONS WERE IN THE ARMY, ONE BY ONE; MADE VISITATION TO HOSPITAL, T. B. PATIENTS. THOSE MISSION WORK REMAIN IN MY MEMORY.

AT RELOCATION CENTER, EVERYONE HAD TO WORK. AT FIRST I WASHED DISHES BUT THAT INTERFERED WITH MY GOING TO CHURCH AND ALSO MY MISSION WORK SO I GAVE IT UP AND I CLEANED THE WASHROOMS IN THE MORNINGS SO I CAN ATTEND CHURCH AND HAD TIME FOR MISSION WORK.

SET UP
THERE WERE MANY CHURCHES/IN THE CENTER. I DELIVERED THE WEEKLY BULLETINS FOR MY AREA, HOUSE BY HOUSE, AND EVEN GAVE THEM TO BUDDHISTS WHO WOULD READ THEM. CHURCH LIFE WAS IN EARNEST, EVERYONE GATHERED TOGETHER, GAVE TESTIMONIES AND PRAYED, AND MANY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MY CHILDREN WERE OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE SO THEY RECEIVED HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION.

IN CAMP, MY TIME WAS SPENT ENTIRELY ON CHURCH AND MISSION WORK. THROUGH IT MY FAITH GREW AND I FEEL GOD'S STRENGTH STRONGER THAN BEFORE.

VIII. RESETTLEMENT - RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD

WE LEFT CAMP IN OCTOBER OF 1942. WE FELT THAT LIFE IN CAMP WAS NOT CONDUSIVE TO GOOD LIVING SO WE MOVED TO SALT LAKE CITY WHERE OUR FRIEND MIYOSHI'S WERE. OUR ONLY EXPERIENCE WAS IN POULTRY FARMING SO WE WANTED TO TRY AGAIN AND LEFT CAMP.

NO COMMENTS RE HOSTELS.

NO COMMENT RE AMERICAN CHURCHES.

WE HAD DIFFICULTY IN FINDING A POULTRY FARM BUT WE FORTUNATELY FOUND ONE

A SMALL POULTRY FARM NEARBY MRS MIYOSHI'S PLACE, SO WE MOVED THERE.

AS TO EDUCATION, MY DAUGHTER WENT TO NEW YORK TO ATTEND UNIVERSITY THERE.
MY SECOND DAUGHTER WENT BACK TO SACRAMENTO AND ENTERED UNIVERSITY. MY TWO SONS,
WE WANTED TO TRAIN THEM IN POULTRY FARMING.

OUR AMERICAN FRIENDS CAME TO OUR AID SO WE DID NOT EXPERIENCE MUCH SUFFERING.

IX. CONCLUSION

AND WORK TOWARD
AS A CHRISTIAN, MY HOPE IS TO FOLLOW THE CROSS AND GOD'S WILL/~~IN~~ BUILDING
OF HIS KINGDOM BUT BECAUSE OF MY PHYSICAL CONDITION I CANNOT DO AS MUCH AS I
WOULD LIKE TO DO BUT I WANT TO SERVE GOD IN ANY WAY I CAN.